

**EdBlast! – ALL
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This issue's message from Jim

Each day in South Carolina, more than 335,000 students ride a bus to school. The state's fleet of buses, which is maintained by the State Department of Education, travels more than 78 million miles per year. Even with this tremendous number of miles traveled, data prove that riding in a school bus is the safest way for children to get to and from school.

"Love The Bus" is a national education campaign designed to raise awareness about the hundreds of thousands of men and women who safely drive more than 25 million children to and from school daily. Valentine's Day has been designated as the day for parents, teachers, and children to express their appreciation to those who are entrusted with the well-being of our children.

Throughout February, the American School Bus Council is holding a series of local events the United States to educate parents and children about school bus safety. On Capitol Hill, members of Congress will have the opportunity to participate in "Love The Bus" activities by touring a state-of-the-art school bus that includes the latest safety, security, and environmental features, and speaking with members of the school transportation industry about federal funding for security enhancements and clean diesel programs.

This week, I join the rest of the nation in saluting our school bus drivers. Thank you for all that you do. You can find out more about the "Love the Bus" campaign by visiting:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/trn/love.html>

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Superintendent accepts school reform plan and announces town hall meetings

State Superintendent of Education Jim Rex today formally accepted a comprehensive plan for reforming, improving and supporting South Carolina's public school system. He then announced plans to take the 97 recommendations "on the road" as a framework for discussions in a series of town hall meetings across the state. To read more, go to:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/news/more.cfm?articleID=735>

Transition Team recommendations promote Superintendent's vision

The comprehensive plan sought by new State Superintendent of Education Jim Rex to promote South Carolina public school reform has been delivered as promised by his Transition Leadership Team. To read more, go to:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/news/more.cfm?articleID=736>

Rex announces sweeping proposal to increase parental choices in public schools

Backed by a bipartisan coalition of legislative and education leaders, State Superintendent of Education Jim Rex has proposed a comprehensive plan to increase the number and variety of choices in South Carolina's public schools. Plan details can be accessed at:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/news/more.cfm?articleID=733>

South Carolina earns A's for laws, policies to fight childhood obesity

South Carolina is one of only six states in the nation to receive top marks in a new national report card for legislative and public policy efforts to control obesity in children. To read more, visit:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/news/more.cfm?articleID=730>

Homeland Park Elementary volunteers recognized for community service

Sarah Sprague and Winfred Green were recognized last week by Palmetto Serves, a state program that honors volunteers who provide exemplary service to youth and families. To read more, visit:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/news/more.cfm?articleID=731>

Lugoff-Elgin Middle School receives prestigious national recognition

Lugoff-Elgin Middle is the first and only South Carolina school to be honored in a national program recognizing high-performing middle schools. The details are available at:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/news/more.cfm?articleID=732>

2007 Teacher Survey being conducted online during the month of February

The State Department of Education's Teacher Survey is one of three surveys used for the annual school report cards. Teachers, librarians, guidance counselors, and speech therapists can complete the survey online. To access the survey visit:

<http://ed.sc.gov>

Taxpayers can contribute to educational entities through tax returns

The South Carolina Financial Literacy Trust Fund is the newest of several entities state taxpayers can contribute to through their income tax returns (Line 13 of 1040A or Line 27 of SC1040). Financial literacy teaches students about personal finance and investments. Contributions can also be made to the K-12 Public Education Fund and First Steps. For more information, contact Marc Drews (mdrews@ed.sc.gov) at 803-734-5836 or visit:

<http://www.sctax.org>

Civil Rights pioneer is February calendar highlight

In 1946 George Elmore challenged the Democratic Party for the right to vote in its all white primary. He won that right after filing a lawsuit in the Federal District Court for the Eastern District of South Carolina in a landmark case known as Elmore v. Rice. Elmore is this month's feature in the BellSouth African American History calendar. To read more about Elmore, go to:

<http://www.scafricanamericanhistory.com/currenthonoree.asp?month=1&year=2007>

EDUCATOR OPPORTUNITIES

State Department's Grants Office offering free writing lab

The State Department of Education's Grants Office will offer a free writing lab on the Early Reading First Pre-proposal on Wednesday, February 14, from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. This will be a working session, so participants should bring laptops and come ready to type, read, review, and ponder. The session will be at the agency's offices at 3710 Landmark Drive, Suite 200. For more information, e-mail grants@ed.sc.gov or call 803-734-5810.

Palmetto State Teachers Association sponsoring Praxis workshops

The Palmetto State Teachers Association is sponsoring Praxis I & II workshops on Saturday, February 17, at the Lexington Town Hall in Lexington. Praxis I will be held from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. The cost is \$10. Praxis II will be held from 2 p.m. - 5 p.m. The cost is \$10 for PSTA members and \$25 for nonmembers. Call 803-256-2065 for more information, or visit:

[Http://www.palmettoteachers.org](http://www.palmettoteachers.org)

American Star program accepting nominations

The U.S. Department of Education is accepting nominations for its 2007 American Stars of Teaching awards, which recognize teachers who are improving student achievement – using innovative strategies – and making a difference in the lives of their students. Anyone can nominate an American Star. After the Department receives a nomination, a verification form is sent to the teacher's principal. One teacher will be recognized from each state and the District of Columbia. The deadline for nominations is April 1. For information, visit:

<https://www.t2tweb.us/AmStar/About.asp>

Underage drinking is focus of conference

The South Carolina Association of Prevention Professionals and Advocates and the Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center will hold their “Changing the Culture of Underage Drinking” conference on March 21-23 at North Trenholm Baptist Church Seminar Center in Columbia. The fee is \$75/person or \$250/team of four. Students can register for \$25. For information, contact Elizabeth Peters at 803-791-3740.

Graduate Economics course announced

A three week course for K-5 teachers will give participants a knowledge of basic economic and financial literacy concepts, an understanding of how to address the standards for economics and financial literacy, and exposure to curriculum materials and confidence in their ability to teach economics and financial literacy to students. The course will held June 11-29 at Winthrop University. There is a fee which includes

textbooks. For information, contact Dr. Stone at stoneg@winthrop.edu, contact Donna Windham at the South Carolina Council on Economic Education at 803-777-2938, or visit:

www.sceconomics.org

University of Iowa offers special graduate assistantships

The College of Education at the University of Iowa has special assistantships in education available to persons interested in pursuing graduate degrees in several fields of study. The stipends are \$16,730. The deadline is March 2. For more information, write: Chair, SGA Selection Committee, University of Iowa, 340 Lindquist Center, Iowa City, IA 52242-1529.

South Carolina Assistive Technology Expo 2007 set

The South Carolina Assistive Technology Expo 2007 will be held Thursday, March 29, 2007, from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center. This event will include exhibits and workshops about the latest assistive technology for people with disabilities and age-related limitations. It is free and open to the public, and no pre-registration is necessary. To make suggestions and for more information, contact Mary Alice Bechtler (maryab@cdd.sc.edu) or Janet Jendron (jjendron@usit.net) or visit:

<http://www.sc.edu/scatp/atexpo07.html>

EDUCATOR RESOURCES

BellSouth African American calendar is more teacher- friendly

The 2007 African American History calendar features twelve accomplished honorees, each with a unique story to tell. It can be downloaded for the full year or month by month. The "For the Classroom" section has been reorganized to make it easier to locate and more useful. Features of the updated section are quick access to the standards-based lesson plans; updated resources and links for researching and projects; and an archive of lesson plans from the past calendar. Lesson plans are based on current academic standards for English-language arts, math, science, social studies. And, fine arts. There is also a series of more general activities that can be used to infuse African American history into any grade level or curricula. To view the calendar, go to:

<http://www.scafricanamericanhistory.com/calendar.asp>

Georgetown University's center accepting applications for fellowships

Georgetown University's Center for Intercultural Education and Development is currently accepting applications for its English Language (EL) Fellow Program Academic Year 2007-08 Fellowships. This program promotes English language learning around the

world, and fosters mutual understanding between the people of the United States and people of other countries. Assignments are from September – June. The fellowship includes a \$25,000 stipend, living allowance (housing, food, utilities, local transportation, international round-trip transportation, insurance, and miscellaneous expenditures. For more information contact elf@georgetown.edu or telephone, 202-687-2068. To apply online, visit:

<http://elf.georgetown.edu/apply>

Newsletter features resources for middle school educators

The MiddleWeb's biweekly newsletter features web-based resources of interest to middle grades educators and others dedicated to the academic success of young adolescents. To subscribe, send a note to norton@middleweb.com with “SUBSCRIBE” in the subject line.

Object of History is teacher resource

Each month The Object of History features an artifact from the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History’s collections related to a major topic in U.S. history. The site includes curriculum materials and opportunities for students to participate in live online forums with Smithsonian curators and historians. Teacher materials include lesson plans and other resources to support instruction. For more information, e-mail teachers@objectofhistory.org or visit:

<http://objectofhistory.org/>

AWARD PROGRAMS

Schools can apply for National School Change awards

Nominations are now being accepted for the Eighth Annual National School Change Awards, conducted by the American Association of School Administrators and the Fordham University Graduate School of Education. Applicants measure themselves against sixteen criteria, and winners receive a \$5,000 grant. Schools can nominate themselves. Materials must be received by March 19. For more information, go to:

<http://www.npli.org/nsca/>

STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES

State Fair to offer scholarships

The South Carolina State Fair will offer fifty \$2,000 scholarships to 2007 graduating seniors in both public and private high schools and home schools in South Carolina. The application period runs through March 21. For more information, contact Lauren

Funderburk (laurenf@scstatefair.org) or telephone 803-799-3387, ext. 15 between 7:30 am - 4 pm. For details and the application, click in the Right Now box located on the right side of :

<http://www.scstatefair.org>

Finding Money for College to repeat

The State Department of Education and ETV's "Finding Money for College" program will repeat February 16, 3 a.m. -5 a.m. The program will also repeat on ETV open circuit on February 16, from 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. on Channel 301.

WWII Museum opens contests to students

Information about the National WWII Museum's 2007 High School On-Line Student Essay Contest and 2007 Middle School Art Contest are on-line. The essay contest is inspired by the special exhibit Anne Frank: A History for Today, which will be on display at the museum this spring. The Museum's Middle School Art Contest is open to students in grades 5-8. Art contest participants must create an original piece of art based in part by the history of WWII. For more information, go to:

www.nationalww2museum.org/education/studentessays.html

www.nationalww2museum.org/education/artcontest.html

Donate Life South Carolina sponsors poster contest

The Paula Moore Dillingham Memorial Poster Contest promotes organ and tissue donation in South Carolina. Sponsored by Donate Life South Carolina for elementary, middle, and high school students, the contest offers students and teachers a positive experience along with raising awareness about this issue. The deadline is March 2. For more information about the contest, including entry rules, call 877-277-4866, e-mail smcadams@donatelifesc.org, or visit:

<http://donatelifesc.org>

Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities offers several programs

The Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities offers several programs in creative writing, drama, music, and visual arts. Offerings range from intensive two-week programs for rising ninth graders and tenth graders to a summer dance program and teacher institutes. For more information, e-mail admissions@scgsah.state.sc.us or visit:

<http://www.scgsah.state.sc.us/index.php>

This issue's quotation

“Americans expect and demand choice in their lives, and they shouldn’t have to make an exception for public education,” Rex said. “When it comes to learning, one size doesn’t fit all. I’m confident that we can broaden our menu of options and still remain accountable to the public, which is a cornerstone of the public school system.”

~~ Dr. Jim Rex, State Superintendent of Education

EdBlast! welcomes submissions

Do you need help in publicizing an education news item that would be of interest to a statewide audience? Send your information to jfairnot@ed.sc.gov or call Janice Larrymore Fairnot, EdBlast! editor, at 803-734-8999.

Spread the word about EdBlast!

We need your help in spreading the word about EdBlast!, the State Department of Education's e-newsletter. Here's the sign-up link:

<http://ed.sc.gov/tools/edblast/>

Thanks for sharing!